

## Pigs

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The sacrifice undoubtedly transforms the nature of the victim, as the meat, after the analogy of the body of Totoima, is divided among all the guests, who will 'greatly multiply' by the *ivo* the meat confers after this simple sacrament.

After the sacrifice the group who offered it becomes irrevocably separated from the victim. The composition of the group to whom consumption of the sacrificed pig is forbidden is as follows: the pig's 'mother' and 'father', their siblings, their parents, their parents' siblings, and their children. Infringement of the taboo is said to lead to the death of one of the sons of the pig's 'mother'. I was told that the taboo lapses once a woman's daughters have themselves given birth to children. We may safely deduce from this last limitation of the range of the taboo that it serves to protect the woman's power of child-bearing. The taboo does not reach to the third generation: it does not include the grandparents of the pig-rearers. Nor does it include parallel or cross-cousins. These rules emphasise the position of the pig as a member of the family group. The sacrificer of a pig is identified with Totoima precisely in that both killed their own children.

The membership of host and guest groups is defined mainly by residence: one village invites another. It also occurs, in multi-clan villages, that the two groups comprise only some of the local clan groups of the host and guest village. I did not note cases of two-clan villages where this happened, but it does occur in four-clan villages such as Hohorita and Sasembata. Some close relatives of the hosts, though not resident in the host village, may decide to attend and may make a food contribution. The guest group that is invited usually matches the host group approximately in strength. If there is a wide discrepancy in numbers there is a tendency for several closely-linked villages to join together as hosts or to be invited together as guests.

Relationships between hosts and guests are cultivated on both the collective and the family level. The Orokaiva have no large houses for guests, so that each family of guests is accommodated with a family of hosts. If two villages have never feasted together partnerships are arranged at a preliminary meeting, always making allowance for previously existing relationships. Once partnerships are established they become a standing reciprocal arrangement, inherited by the children of the original partners. A good part of the planning of a feast consists of amassing suitable gifts to be made to one's visiting partner. It is he who must, above all, be impressed by his host and overwhelmed with generosity. On the collective level, guests are expected to dance for their hosts and to carry out rain-making and crop-promoting rituals.

When I asked why the help of guest sorcerers was necessary to ensure increase of the food supply, I was told that if taro grows poorly in a garden it is assumed that an enemy is using *puripuri* (a form of magic) against this garden, thus stopping the taro from flourishing. When a whole village has poor results, it is believed that someone has used medicine against *all* the gardens. According to his reasoning, the task of the friendly magicians at a feast is to remove their own previous black magic from the gardens. As shown in previous chapters, the assumption is always that parties meeting at a feast have been living in something like imperfect harmony. This implies that there may have been sorcery.

The harvest feast is, therefore, an occasion when the community acts as a corporate group to meet a magical danger which transcends the individual. A

601 Min: Sister exchange marriage. Dor: Marriage 'by purchase'. Under this code, we may define the following terms:

1. Terms principally used for addressing consanguines:

|        |    |    |    |     |     |
|--------|----|----|----|-----|-----|
| epe:   | Ef | M  | Sr | G1  | A   |
|        | M  | Sr | G1 | A   | Min |
| tata:  | Ef | F  | Sr | G1  | A   |
|        | F  | Sr | G1 | A   | Min |
| ahije: | F  | Jr | G1 | A   |     |
|        | Jr | G1 | A  | Min |     |

2. Exclusively affinal terms

|         |    |     |     |    |     |     |     |                    |
|---------|----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|
| atovo:  | Em | M   | Sr  | G1 | //  | A   | Dor |                    |
| imbohi: | Em | F   | Sr  | G1 | A   | Dor |     | (Williams: imboti) |
| behere: | Em | SS  | G1  | X  | A   | Dor |     | (Williams: betere) |
| dambo:  | Em | SS  | G-O | // | A   |     |     | (Williams: nabori) |
|         | Em | SS  | G-O | X  | A   |     |     | (Williams: betere) |
| hovatu: | OS | G-O | A   |    |     |     |     |                    |
| bi:     | Ef | SS  | G-O | A  |     |     |     |                    |
| imi:    | M  | Jr  | G1  | A  | Dor |     |     |                    |

601 The fact that a brother and sister, upon marriage, use different types of  
602 affinal kinship terms corresponds to a fundamental difference in their social position in relation to their affinal family. The brother, under a *dorobu* marriage contract, remains a perpetual debtor to his affines. He has deprived them of their most precious possession, a nubile daughter, without giving a woman in exchange. Even though he has given bridewealth and done bride service, and continued making prestations of many kinds, these propitiatory offerings do not wipe out the debt. The *imi* must therefore always act with humility and feel shame when he meets his *atovo* and even more, his *imbohi*. His sister, however, is under no such burden in her relations with her own affines. Her position is precisely the same, whether the marriage has been established by *mine* or *dorobu*. Her use of consanguineal terminology expresses her far greater familiarity and identification.

[591] It might be argued that such familiarity and identification is the direct consequence of patrilocal virilocal residence, but such residence arrangements do not always lead to the terminological differences I have described. These differences, however, are consistent with an ideology which emphasises the detachment of women from their natal clans and their close attachment to their mother's village to which they are supposed to move upon marriage.

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614 Such an ideology is further emphasised by the Orokaiva notions about paternity. Orokaiva believe that a male child is formed in the womb as the result of sexual congress between father and mother, but that a female child is formed by 'the mother sleeping alone'. The male child therefore carries the 'blood' of the father, enabling the child to carry on the father's lineage, but the female child does not. She is still a member of the paternal clan but the connection is evidently viewed as social rather than physiological. Accordingly all females are named by their mother's consanguines, in contrast to males who may be named

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by a consanguine of either side, the proper side being determined by a medicine man (See Schwimmer 1969). The effect of this theory is that a woman belongs to her clan in a less absolute sense than a man. 842 614

This theory of paternity may be explained teleologically as serving to emphasise the rights and identity of the patriclan in a social system which 'very nearly approaches' bilaterality. In Orokaiva society women very often receive a portion of patrimony land. Their indulgent brothers frequently give lands to their sister's children and such land may well pass into the hands of those children's heirs. Currently, over 50 per cent of cultivated land is owned by persons other than the cultivators, and very often the cultivator's useholds became perpetuated. Such perpetuation proceeds in spite of an explicit rule denying women hereditary rights to their patrimony useholds. The physiological reasoning by which Orokaiva women are denied full clan membership should therefore be interpreted as a symbolic statement insisting on the limits that should be placed upon uterine intrusion on clan property. 614 423 428 562

When Orokaiva informants are asked why women should not have hereditary rights over land, they usually give as the reason that a woman will marry into a strange clan and village so that it would be dangerous to give her children any rights. Such reasoning goes back to a time when the most frequent marriage forms were abduction and elopement. In practice, the fate of a woman's patrimony rights depends on where she marries: if she does marry in a friendly neighbouring village or by sister exchange, her children will probably keep her property. This is therefore the preferred feminine pattern. But if she is taken by a man from a strange village, her clan rights become precarious. We have already seen that this latter pattern of marriage is forced upon men not only by ecological contingencies but by the marriage rules themselves. Ideological devices to deny women full clan membership are consistent with this pattern. Such devices are inconsistent with restricted marriage exchange, because the latter system depends on the return of a woman's offspring to her natal clan as marriage partners in a later generation. In the Orokaiva system this is envisaged as only one of several structurally recognised possibilities.

## 8. The Nature of Orokaiva Bridewealth

The most convenient way of explaining the nature of Orokaiva bridewealth payments (*dorobu*) is by contrasting them with certain types of African bridewealth (*lobola*), as analysed by Lévi-Strauss.<sup>2</sup> Here the recipient applies the gifts, wholly or in large part, to the immediate purchase of wives for himself or his family. *Lobola n'est reçu que pour commencer, aussitôt, un nouveau circuit . . . Il ne sera jamais consommé, sauf, occasionnellement et partiellement, à des fins sacrificielles. A peine reçu, il fera l'objet d'un remploi, sous la forme d'une épouse pour le frère ou le cousin de la jeune mariée* (1967:536). Under such a system it could rightly be said that 'la femme fournie en contrepartie est remplacée par une valeur symbolique' and that the wife-giving families received in return 'la garantie, sous forme de biens privilégiés, de trouver elles-mêmes des épouses' (*ibid.* 540). 583 171

Papuan bridewealth objects, however, cannot generally be applied to the same ends, or are not in practice generally so applied. The most important Orokaiva 583

## CORRESPONDENCE

### Virgin birth

Sir,

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[114] The contributions by Spiro and Kaberry in your June issue (3, 242-61, 311-13) and the continuing correspondence (3, 651-6) prompt me to mention briefly the views on physiological paternity held by the Orokaiva of Papua, as explained to me when I was doing fieldwork there in 1966-1967.

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[115] The Orokaiva believe that a child is conceived when the spirit of a dead kinsman wishes to enter a new human body. If a newborn child is a male, it is believed to have been formed as the result of sexual congress between the father and mother both of whom have contributed 'blood'. The birth of the male child is, therefore, explained by a combination of two events, the entry of the spirit and sexual intercourse. If a newborn child is a female it is believed to have been formed by 'a woman sleeping alone', i.e. the female child is not thought to have a human genitor. While this theory leaves open the possibility of 'virgin birth', Orokaiva notions about the development of the embryo go against it. The growth of the embryo must be stimulated by frequent sexual intercourse. A spirit is said usually to choose a sexually active woman for its rebirth.

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842 The customs concerning the naming of children are consistent with this theory. The naming of girls is always left to the mother's consanguines as the spirit which entered her is thought to belong to a deceased maternal consanguine. The naming of boys is more complicated as the question arises whether the spirit entered the mother and thus fertilised her, or entered the father and passed from him to the mother. In the former case, it is presumed that the spirit was a dead consanguine of the mother; naming is then entrusted to the mother's consanguines. In the latter case, it is presumed that the spirit was a dead consanguine of the father whose kinsmen are accordingly entrusted with the naming ritual. About half of the male babies are, according to my records, named by maternal relatives, and half by paternal ones. 851  
[614] A medicine man (*sivo embo*) is called in to determine to whose side the spirit of a male baby belongs. Both the male and the female babies become part of the paternal clan (the Orokaiva are patrilineal). If a man has paid bridewealth for a woman, he is pater to all the children borne by that woman as long as the

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851 marriage is in force; he is, in addition, considered to be the genitor of all her male offspring though not her female offspring.

842 It is obvious that the Orokaiva know the 'basic fact' that when a man and woman have sexual intercourse, the birth of a child often follows and that the latter, in common experience, does not occur unless preceded by the former. The recognition of this fact does not impel them to adopt a genuine 'theory of physiological paternity'; their basic theory remains that of spirit entry which is deemed essential to the conception of all children, whether male or female. The notion of physiological paternity is introduced only to solve a somewhat different problem: why the sexes differ in physiology and legal status. The answer runs as follows: the male is believed to have a special quality (*ivo*), not shared by the female. This is a strength or power enabling the male to play his distinctive roles and it is transmitted by a man to his son in the 'male blood' which enters the mother in intercourse. This is the *ivo* of the lineage. As women do not receive this type of blood, they cannot carry on the lineage: filiation is patrilineal. Having only the 'weaker' blood of their mothers, they become women.

842 Leach's essay on 'virgin birth' does a good deal to illuminate the Orokaiva case. The Orokaiva, like Christians and the people of ancient Mediterranean societies, believe that some births are the consequence of sexual congress whereas others are not. Both cultures have a further theory according to which some children may be conceived by a 'woman sleeping alone'. Furthermore, both systems explain conception in these circumstances by a spirit entering a woman and fertilising her.

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182 Now, as I understand Leach, in all quoted cases of parthenogenesis, a great social distance separates a father of egregious status from a mother and maternal lineage of much lower status. In some of the quoted cases, the offspring inherits the father's high status while in others, the offspring remains (as in the Trobriands) in the lower 'stratum' of the mother. The somewhat unusual Orokaiva case fits this pattern quite well. Woman is not destined to stay in the clan but to be abducted or to elope and settle elsewhere, but her children will always covet the clan's land and her brother who is expected to love her is

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 [842] not unlikely to meet her request. Her brother's children will fear her constant demands and her threats of sorcery. Her actual power is so great that a religious construct, proclaiming her social distance from the men of the clan, and making her look low and insignificant, may help somewhat to keep the embattled clan patrimony together. It is therefore tempting to treat Orokaiva parthenogenesis theory as offering further evidence for the tension between patrilineal and matrilineal kin, though this tension could be demonstrated more easily by less esoteric means.

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 842 The Orokaiva case makes one wonder just what constitutes 'knowledge of physiological paternity'. Leach writes about 'basic facts of physiological paternity' (1967: 41) which anyone but an idiot would know. On the other hand, Spiro speaks of a 'theory' and compares 'physiological paternity' to the 'heliocentric universe' (1968: 344)—the latter was a theory that man did not have until the fifteenth century. Spiro does not quite indicate at what point in time mankind obtained 'knowledge' of the former theory, but he evidently thinks it was well before the birth of Jesus. I am not sure just how Spiro would classify the case of the Orokaiva: are they 'ignorant' of physiological paternity or not? Are they less ignorant than the Trobrianders but more ignorant than the Dobuans (who do not believe in virgin birth at all)? Do not all these groups derive their theory on this subject in precisely the same way, namely in the context of a metaphysical cognitive system? It seems to me that a significant difference between the Melanesians and modern man, if it exists at all, does not lie in the substantive content of their theory of physiological paternity, but in the capacity of modern man to show by empirical evidence that the Trobrianders are wrong, the Dobuans right and the Orokaiva in between. As for the contemporaries of Jesus, they seem to resemble the Melanesians rather than modern man, in that they had no such empirical evidence.

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 [824] I think that in primitive thought we should distinguish between empirical generalizations, which may often imply no more than a rough statistical correlation, and deductive theories implying causal connexions. It is notorious that primitive thought will easily move from the former to the latter, as the Orokaiva do, for instance, when they note that *tanga* leaves fall while the main taro crop is coming up and postulate that it is the dropping *tanga* leaves that cause the crop to prosper. There is no reason to believe, however, that the Orokaiva invariably make a causal theory out of an empirical correlation and they may even omit to do so where modern thought would applaud such a step. A person may 'know' as

121 an empirical generalization that sexual intercourse and conception often go together, and that the latter tends to follow upon the former, without proceeding from this 'basic fact' to the 'theory' that conception is caused by sexual intercourse.

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 842 This point has already emerged from the debate between Leach, Spiro and Kaberry when Kaberry showed evidence that the tribes she studied 'had no idea of the true relation between sexual intercourse and conception' while she admitted that these tribes know empirically that sex relations are a necessary preliminary to pregnancy. She made the valuable point that her informants' empirical knowledge does not logically entail a 'correct' theory of procreation. The Orokaiva case again illustrates that such empirical knowledge may serve as a building block for a wide range of soundly constructed though perhaps 'incorrect' causal theories.

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113 Leach, E. R. 1967. Virgin birth. *Proc. R. anthropol. Inst.* 1966, 39-49.  
 Spiro, Melford E. 1968. Virgin birth, parthenogenesis and physiological paternity: an essay in cultural interpretation. *Man (N.S.)* 3, 242-61.

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